

recommit H.R. 3963, and "yea" on rollcall No. 1009, final passage of H.R. 3963, the Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I erroneously cast my vote against H.R. 505, the Native Hawaiian Government Reorganization Act. Please let the written record show that I intended to vote "aye" on roll call vote number 1000.

LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

(Mr. BLUNT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Speaker, I yield to my friend from Maryland, the majority leader, for information about the schedule next week.

Mr. HOYER. I thank my friend for yielding.

On Monday, the House will meet at 12:30 p.m. for morning-hour business and 2 p.m. for legislative business, with votes rolled until 6:30 p.m. We will consider several bills under suspension of the rules. A list of those bills will be announced by the end of business tomorrow.

On Tuesday, the House will meet at 9 a.m. for morning-hour business and 10 a.m. for legislative business. On Wednesday and Thursday, the House will meet at 10 a.m. for legislative business. We expect to consider H.R. 3867, the Small Business Contracting Improvements Act; H.R. 2262, the Hardrock Mining and Reclamation Act; and H.R. 3920, the Trade and Globalization Assistance Act. On Friday, there will be no votes, as I announced earlier today.

Mr. BLUNT. I thank the gentleman for the information. Two bills we thought we might deal with this week I notice are still not on the schedule: the Employment Non-Discrimination Act and the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. I wonder if my friend has any information about either of those bills?

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for the question, and I will tell him that both of those bills are under consideration for addition to the calendar. They have not been added at this point in time, but they are both possibilities.

Mr. BLUNT. I thank you for that. On the question I have asked now for the last few weeks about conferences on appropriations bills, I believe 1987 was the last year that the Congress hadn't passed a single appropriations bill by this time in October 1987, particularly on the Military Quality of Life bill that has been ready for some time. I am wondering if there is any chance that we could go to conference on that bill or any other appropriations bill in the near future.

Mr. HOYER. We passed the Military Construction bill here handily through the House. It has passed the Senate. We want to get a conference finished. We

know the staff is working on that. We hope to go to conference very soon. We certainly want to pass that bill in the near term, and other appropriations bills are being pre-conferenced as well as getting ready to go to conference.

I say to the gentleman, as you know, we passed bills here in a relatively timely fashion, all by August, and I want to see those bills moved and sent to the President. We hope to do that as soon as we can. We are working on it.

Mr. BLUNT. I am pretty familiar with that equation, where the House passes its bills and then we don't have the bills done. I don't recall ever getting a lot of credit for that, but I will suggest I appreciate the gentleman's position, and I appreciate the fact the House got its bills done.

It still has been 20 years since we failed to get any bills done by October 25. Of these bills that are ready, I do hope we can figure out a way to move them, again, particularly on the Military Quality of Life bill for veterans and for the families of people serving today, and for military retirees. I think it's about \$18.5 million a day of additional benefits that could have been going as of October 1, and I know I brought this up before, I don't mean to be offensive about it, but I really strongly feel that this is a bill that we could get on the President's desk and get started quickly.

Mr. HOYER. We want to pass that bill. The bill that passed out of the House is the best bill that's passed out of the House for veterans since 77 years ago when the Veterans' Administration was formed. We are very proud of that bill. It had overwhelming bipartisan support. We think it is an excellent bill. We want to see it signed by the President.

I will observe, though, Mr. BLUNT, that I can't remember a time that I have served here over the last 26 years where a President said, if you are not exactly at my number, I will veto all of your bills. That has put a real crimp in the appropriations process of trying to figure out how to get this process done on bills that, for the most part, have been very strongly supported.

In the Senate, there hasn't been under, I think, 71 votes or 72 votes for any of the appropriations bills they have passed. We have had an average of 285 votes for the bills we have passed, some less, some more, so that the Congress has passed its bills with relative ease that it's considered on the floor, but the President continues to say he is going to veto bills if we go anything over what he has told us to do.

Very frankly, we think under article I of the Constitution, it's our prerogative to fund the priorities that we believe are important for our country. We have done that, and we are hopeful. I have had discussions with the White House about the possibility of compromise. Mr. OBEY has had conversations, and we do not have compromise yet on that position. So I tell my

friend that that has made it somewhat more difficult for us to do.

If it's unprecedented that we haven't passed one before October, I tell the gentleman, without having checked the records, I can't remember a President, certainly not this President, ever saying that to previous Congresses, which, by the way, as you know, for at least 4 years cut defense spending below what the President asked for and increased domestic spending above what he asked for. We have not done that. As a matter of fact, we have enhanced the President's request on the Defense appropriation bill, as you know, for MRAPs and for Afghanistan and for other items that we thought were necessary. So we are over the President's number.

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But we're working on it. We hope to get those to the President as soon as possible, and we're certainly hopeful that he will sign the bills that we send him.

Thank you for yielding.

Mr. BLUNT. I thank the gentleman for that. Again, I'd suggest on the Military Quality of Life bill, I think the President said he's ready to sign that bill, even though it exceeds his request. And of course it would drive the average up dramatically of the passage of the other bill, since every Member of the House voted for it. But the other bills did get bipartisan support at some level. I do understand that.

I also understand that I think all the other bills, but one, probably had enough people voting against them to sustain a veto. But as the actions today would have been evidence of, the very fact the President says he's going to veto is not the ultimate impediment to us getting our work done and challenging him with that.

One of the announcements you made today was on the Trade Adjustment Assistance Act. I wonder, could we begin to expect a vote then on the Peru Free Trade Agreement after Trade Adjustment Assistance is on the floor next week?

Mr. HOYER. It is my hope and expectation that we will schedule Peru for the week of the 5th, the vote on the Peru Trade Agreement the week of the 5th, which would be not next week, but the week after.

Mr. BLUNT. But the following week, the week after we do Trade Adjustment Assistance is what the gentleman is saying.

Mr. HOYER. Yes.

Mr. BLUNT. I appreciate that.

On the calendar generally, I actually received a document this week that one of your chairmen had sent around town that suggested, actually it didn't suggest, it said here's going to be the schedule for December. I wonder if that's accurate, or if the gentleman could share his plans for December, if we are in, this would be assuming, my friend, that we haven't finished our work yet on November 16, we'll be working in December. Are we to the